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AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - Mine in Marikana: an agreement for peace has been reached, but it is not signed by all

Johannesburg (Agenzia Fides) - Three miners' unions, the company Lomnine that operates the platinum mine in Marikana (the scene of the massacre on 16 August when the police caused the deaths of 34 protesters) and the South African government signed on 5 September an agreement to continue the negotiations concerning salary peacefully.
"The agreement was not signed by the union AMCU and by representatives of miners struggling in Marikana. They claim to be interested only in a wage increase" says to Fides His Exc. Mgr. Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg (South Africa). "This is a 300% increase from the current 4,000 to 12,500 Rand per month. The Association of South African mining company, however, has stated that it is impossible to grant a wage increase of this kind, because any mining company with such salaries would go bankrupt. "
It is clear that allowing an increase like this to the miners in Marikana means opening a series of trade disputes in all mining sites in the Country to get similar salary increases.
According to the agreements signed yesterday, the negotiations related to salary must be reached within 30 days, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and peace. But the fact that the union that started the protest has not signed the peace agreement, threatens to erupt further incidents.
"Yesterday - said Mgr. Dowling - during a new demonstration, death threats against some of the mangers of the mine were even uttered. The protest was chiefly the work of a hard core of about 3-4000 miners that started in August. The other miners would like to return to work but they are still subjected to threats and intimidation," the Bishop concluded. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/09/2012)

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